

# UC Monthly Safety Spotlight, May 2012

## Avoiding Heat-Related Illness and Injury

The information on the right was copied from the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) heat illness prevention website. The website contains guidelines, general information, employee communication tools and heat prevention training information.

Visit the site at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo.html>

### California employers are required to take these four steps to prevent heat illness



#### 1. Training

Train all employees and supervisors about heat illness prevention.

#### 2. Water

Provide enough fresh water so that each employee can drink at least 1 quart per hour, and encourage them to do so.

#### 3. Shade

Provide access to shade and encourage employees to take a cool-down rest in the shade for at least 5 minutes. *They should not wait until they feel sick to cool down.*

#### 4. Planning

Develop and implement written procedures for complying with the Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard.

### CalOSHA updated information on providing water and shade for employees:

**UC is committed to following California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CalOSHA) guidelines for the safety of all employees. The following are updated CalOSHA requirements. Work with your supervisor and/or safety coordinator to determine the appropriate heat-related illness and injury safe work practices for your UC department.**

When the temperature does not exceed 85 degrees Fahrenheit, employers must provide prompt access to shade when requested by an employee. Employers should monitor predicted weather temperatures in advance, for example via TV or radio, so that they can have a general idea when the temperature is likely to exceed 85 degrees. Regardless of what the predicted high has been the previous day, employers are expected to know if the actual temperature is exceeding 90 degrees F at their worksite. If the temperature enters this range, shade must actually be present regardless of the previous day's predicted temperature high. Employees shall have access to potable drinking water meeting the requirements of Sections 1524, 3363, and 3457, as applicable. Where drinking water is not plumbed or otherwise continuously supplied, it shall be provided in sufficient quantity at the beginning of the work shift to provide one quart per employee per hour for drinking for the entire shift. Employers may begin the shift with smaller quantities of water if they have effective procedures for replenishment during the shift as needed to allow employees to drink one quart or more per hour.

Where unlimited drinking water is not immediately available from a plumbed system or otherwise continuously supplied, the employer must provide enough water for every employee to be able to drink one quart of water, or four 8-ounce cups, per hour. The water must always be cool, and in very hot weather it is recommended that employers have ice on hand to keep the water cool.

Shade required to be present when the temperature exceeds 85 degrees Fahrenheit. When the outdoor temperature in the work area exceeds 85 degrees Fahrenheit, the employer shall have and maintain one or more areas with shade at all times while employees are present that are either open to the air or provided with ventilation or cooling. The amount of shade present shall be at least enough to accommodate 25% of the employees on the shift at any time, so that they can sit in a normal posture fully in the shade without having to be in physical contact with each other. The shaded area shall be located as close as practicable to the areas where employees are working.

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Certain physical risk factors influence how heat illness can occur. If you plan to work in hot environments, talk to your supervisor or safety coordinator to learn how to identify your risk factors and how to develop safe work practices that mitigate them.

- Your age
- Lack of acclimatization  
(not getting used to the work environment in gradual steps)
- Dehydration
- Health: Obesity and being out of shape play a major role
- Water, caffeine or alcohol consumption
- Pregnancy, diabetes, skin or sweat gland disorders
- Conditions that can cause dehydration (i.e. diarrhea)
- Blood pressure or cardiovascular problems
- Use of certain prescription medications
- Missed meals